



Rock Island Rotary Weekly Review



January 7, 2019: Volume XXVI, Issue 26
MEETING EVERY TUESDAY NOON - QUAD CITY BOTANICAL CENTER



January - February Calendar

- Jan 15 - Mark Poulos - "River Rescuing Today"
- Jan 22 - Lauren Hall, 2018 recipient of the Rock Island Rotary Augustana College Scholarship.
- Jan 29 - Angela Campbell "Rock Island Library's New Strategic Plan"
- Feb 5 - TBA
- Feb 12 - Club Assembly

In a joint meeting with Rock Island Kiwanis, Rock Island Rotary heard Mayor Mike Thoms' "State of the City"

Address today at the Quad City Botanical Center. The Mayor was very upbeat in his presentation of accomplishment and positive plans for the future. He began his comments setting a goal that every citizen of Rock Island should be Proud, Involved, and Excited about our city. The Mayor then went through department by department discussing accomplishments during the past year.

Starting with the Community Economic Development Department he noted that they do much more than seek new businesses for Rock Island. They also handled 3,200 new Building Permits; conducted 700 health inspections; developed a new neighborhood park at 14th Avenue and 30th Street; demolished and removed a number of blighted properties; turned vacant and abandoned lots into garden areas producing an estimated \$65,000 worth of food. They were also busy in attracting and expanding businesses to Rock Island which brought in 300 new jobs and \$27,000,000 in new investments.

Turning to the Police Department, the Mayor was pleased to report a 9% decrease in serious crimes in the past year and a whopping 35% decrease in violent crimes. The police also participated in numerous Community Caring Conference neighborhood picnics allowing children to climb in their squad cars and learn that police are not to be feared or distrusted. Improving police relationships in the neighborhoods is a high priority for the city. Mayor Thoms took particular pride in announcing that the Rock Island Police received accreditation as a Tier II Police Agency, and that Rock Island is the only Illinois Quad City to achieve that honor.

The Fire department was next on the Mayor's list and he noted that they provided "Operation Prom" events for our high school students and also attended the neighborhood picnics along with our police. Children were allowed to climb on and in the firetrucks and became acquainted with our fire fighting personnel.

The Public Works Department has been particularly busy this year, erecting and taking down our flood barriers and pumps three different times. They also replaced broken and dangerous sidewalks near several of our elementary schools, making walking to school safer and more pleasant. The city has also been actively converting street lights to LED illumination, providing more efficient and economical lighting of our streets. Public Works has a goal of trying to be more energy efficient with sustainable "green" innovations. Noting that the savings must be proveable, Mayor Thoms said we won't be adopting things just because it is the fad to do it, but if it has real environmental and economic benefit for the city, we will be using it. Public Works has also complete replacing the water pumps in the storm water treatment system, which has been a multi-year project. A new water treatment plant, costing \$20 million is about half completed and will replace the current plant which is 110 years old. Looking to the future he said Public Works will be resurfacing 18th Avenue from 17th street to Moline and 38th Street from 7th Avenue to Blackhawk Road. These projects are planned for 2019.

[Continued page 3, "Public Works"]



P.O. Box 4514
Rock Island, IL 61204
www.rirotary.com

Officers

Sue Cassatt, President
Mark Mayeski, 1st VP
Angela Campbell, 2nd VP
Anne McGlynn, Secretary
Carrie Crossen, Treasurer
Bruce Peterson, Past Pres.
Co-Sergeant at Arms
Bob Swanson & Vic Boblett

Board Members

Rick Emery
Sarah Gorham
Kathy Lelonek
John Oliger
Justin Peterson
Molly Shattuck
Bill Stengel
Tammy Weikert

Program Chairs 2018-19

Aug – Sept: Stan Coin
Oct – Nov: Mike Locander
Dec – Jan: John Wetzel
Feb – Mar: TBA
Apr – May: Gary Rowe
June – July: TBA

Club Notes & Announcements!

□ **WELCOME GUESTS!** Rock Island Rotary was pleased to welcome guests attending today's meeting. Mark Zimmerman of the Davenport Club was our only visiting Rotarian this week; but is always welcome! Shawn Zambrano, Dan Jaros, and Jeff Rose, all from the American Bank were guests of Rick Emery. David Parker, Jr. was a guest of his father, David Parker. Ann Showalter was a guest of spouse of Tom Showalter as was their daughter, Shellee Showalter. Guests are always welcome at Rock Island Rotary!

□ **ROTARY NIGHT AT AUGUSTANA – THIS SATURDAY**, January 12th, See Page 4 for details.

□ **SERVICE–** Help is still needed with the Heart of Hope Food Pantry. We help every Thursdays from 5:30 to 7:30pm. It's easy duty and is truly Service Above Self at its most basic definition. Volunteers have been scarce lately, so please contact Al Metz to join our team of volunteers! Used but sound plastic bags are needed too. They also are collecting men's and women's winter clothing for their free clothing exchange. Drop off anytime the Heart of Hope Center is open. Call Al Metz to volunteer to help at 309-236-2013.

□ **BIG BROTHERS – BIG SISTERS PUTT AROUND** this year is January 30th and February 1st. In the past we've had a Rotary Team participate. Sue Cassatt is raring to go if at least 3 other volunteers to join the team. It's a fun charitable event. Let Sue know if you will join the team!

□ **ROTARY NIGHT AT THE Q.C. STORM** is February 15th. Let's make it a family outing and a Rotary social event. Let Sue Cassatt know if you want tickets. It will be a fun evening and lends our support to a brand-new Quad City entity. **STORM HOCKEY IS WILD, WOOLY, AND GREAT FUN!**

□ **Have Items for our Newsletter?** Email to bobdebswanson@att.net. If you attend a Rotary event and take pictures, please also email or text them to Bob. The newsletter is much better with lots of photos!

SAY HELLO TO OUR NEWEST MEMBERS

Quad City Bank & Trust Company has joined Rock Island Rotary as a corporate member. Their primary member is Amber Brummit. Alternate members are Elizabeth Grabin, Eric Spriet, Miranda Marshall, and Doug Hultquist. Be sure to take time to say "Hello" and welcome them to Rock Island Rotary!



Amber Brummitt



Beth Grabin



Eric Spriet



Miranda Marshall



Doug Hultquist

FOUNDATION RAFFLE REPORT

Since today was a joint meeting with Rock Island Kiwanis, there was not Rotary Raffle today. Hang on to your dollars ---- Rotary Raffle will be back next week with cash, wine, and who knows what other prizes!

FOUNDATION MINUTE

With 2017 -2018 behind us – The Rotary Foundation is pleased to report an outstanding year! Its annual fund raised \$131.4 million dollars, its endowment brought in \$28.5 million with an 8% return, and the PolioPlus Fund brought in \$143.6 million. It has been awarded 4 stars by Charities Navigator for the 11th year in a row and has approved 503 district grants and its program awards totaled \$27.4 million!

Cumulatively, since 1985 Rotary has helped immunize more than 2.5 billion children against polio and as of June 2018, had spent more than \$1.8 billion toward global polio eradication. Since 2002-2003, 1,245 fellows from more than 120 countries have participated in Rotary's Peace Fellowship Program, and program awards for these fellows and the centers have totaled \$4.0 million. Since 2013-14, the Foundation awarded 5,677 global grants totaling \$332.1 million and 2,466 in district grants totaling \$126.1 million.

Your generosity has enabled this to happen! Happy New Year! Thank you.

GALENA DISTRICT CONFERENCE

Our District Conference is approaching faster than we think. It will be held **May 17 and 18** in Galena at the De Soto House. The committee is working hard to plan a fun and fulfilling event. Rooms are now open at the De Soto House. Be sure to tell them you are part of the Rotary conference to receive a reduced rate!. Call 815-777-0090 for reservations. Once the principal river port of the Upper Mississippi Valley, Galena reached its economic peak during the 1850's. With the coming of the Illinois Central Railroad, a group of local investors formed the "Galena Hotel Company" and built a grand hotel to reflect the growing prosperity of this "Metropolis of the Northwest". Named for the discoverer of the Mississippi River, the DeSoto House opened on April 9, 1855 and was billed as the "Largest Hotel in the West." Perhaps its most notable visitor was President Abraham Lincoln, who spoke from its Main Street balcony on July 23, 1856, in support of John Fremont's bid for presidency. Just two years later, on July 25, 1858 Senator Stephen A. Douglas spoke from the same balcony. On September 13, 1860, a crowd of over 15,000 rallied in front of the DeSoto in response to a "Grand Republican Mass Meeting" in support of Lincoln's presidential bid. Ulysses S. Grant's return to his hometown of Galena following the Civil War, brought 25,000 citizens to the streets to welcome him home. Bands, parades, and cannon salutes preceded a reception ball for 2,000 persons which was held at the DeSoto House. Grant later used rooms 209 and 211 of the hotel as his presidential campaign headquarters. Geneva is a popular tourist destination with its scenic location along the Fox River and numerous shops and restaurants. Join the fun, make your reservation today!

[Public works cont. from page 1]

Public Works has also been the manager of Sunset Marina. The city has now hired an outside company to take over the management duties. Hopefully this will be a more efficient and economical way to operate the marina.

The Information Technology Department has also been busy upgrading and installing a new printing system for the Rock Island Library. They also installed additional public safety cameras at four locations in Rock Island.

The Finance Department worked hard this year and as a result the City's bond rating was improved. They also received commendations for their documentation and record keeping for audit purposes.

The Human Resources Department, in addition to handling the screening and hiring of city personnel, presented a Benefit Fair for citizens and employees.

The Martin Luther King Center continues to be a bee hive of activity. This year they received a \$125,000 state grant to provide programs and services for 11 to 17-year-old youngster. The Mayor noted that this group is often the age group that can be led into misbehavior if more positive alternatives are not available. The Center also partnered with Spring Forward and the Rock Island-Milan School District to provide summer reading activities for children.

[Continued page 4 "Library"]

[Library cont. from page 3]

Turning to the Library, Mayor Thoms noted that 19,000 visits were made to the Rock Island Library this past year, an increase of 10% over 2017. The city refreshed the furnishings in the Children's reading area and the Library was a main participant in the "Rock Town Reads" project, promoting reading by providing role model examples.

Our own officers along with Rotarian School Superintendent, Mike Oberhaus and Kiwanis President Jeff Condit were among the role models participating in Rock Town Reads. The Library also conducted 150 outreach programs encouraging readers of all ages to obtain and use a library card.

Turning to Parks and Recreation, the Mayor stated that phase I of the Douglas Park renovation has been completed which included bleachers, dugouts, the concession building, and field renovation. Proudly stating that Douglas Park was the site of the first National Football League game on September 26, 1920,

the Mayor was pleased to announce that Rock Island will host Round III of the 2019 NFL Draft. It will be conducted at Augustana College on April 27th. The P&R Department also opened the first "First Tee" program in the Illinois Quad Cities at Highland Springs Golf Course. He said that White Water Junction had 37,000 visitors this year and RIFAC had over 200,000 visits. The Mayor said that the golf courses and RIFAC are financially self-sustaining and provide about 75% of the Department's budget. The Department sponsored the summer Starlight review Concert series in Lincoln Park and the Red, White, and Boom Celebration on the river front. They also erected an ADA Shelter at Hodge Park and continued their partnership with the Friends of Hauberg to renovate the Hauberg Mansion, which is now a revenue producing asset for the city, hosting numerous weddings, receptions, and other social gatherings.

In conclusion, the Mayor said that although the accomplishments and accolades are easy and fun to review, there are also realities facing our city. Financially the city is solid and stable; but they are now having to dip into reserves to maintain a balanced budget. More sources of revenue are needed, and more fat must be cut from the budget. Noting that all cuts hurt, he said the goal is to keep our good core services. He stated that they city will continue to work to attract business and to help existing ones expand and prosper. His final very up-beat statement was "This Town Rocks!" Rotary thanks Mayor Thoms for his hard work and dedication to our city. We are delighted to call him one of our own. Thanks also to the Rock Island Kiwanis Club for hosting today's meeting.



Rotary Night



Saturday, January 12

7:00 pm

**Augustana Vikings
vs
Carthage Redmen**

Rotarians and their families will be admitted free. Just identify yourself as a Rotarian.

Moline Rotary will be hosting a hospitality room during half time on the second floor of the Carver Center. Come see the nation's 3rd Ranked NCAA Division III basketball team in action!

